

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

AID-05 /062 W

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R 180033Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2190

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 2323

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, RP, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT MARCOS' SPEECH AT PHILIPPINE MILITARY
ACADEMY (PMA) GRADUATION FEB 17, 1976

BEGIN SUMMARY

IN SPEECH AT PMA IN BAGUIO FEB 17, PRESIDENT MARCOS
STRESSED FAMILIAR THEME OF NATIONAL SELF RELIANCE AND
REITERATED SECRETARY ROMULO WOULD BEGIN DISCUSSION OF
US-GOP SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE SECRETARY IN
WASHINGTON ON APRIL 12. MARCOS SAID ALL ABLE BODIED
YOUTH WOULD BE REQUIRED TO WORK IN RURAL AREAS ONE
YEAR AND ANNOUNCED CREATION OF NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE.
PRESIDENT PROMISED REORGANIZATION OF AFP "WITHIN THE
QUARTER" AND CONTINUATION OF MILITARY CLEANUP CAMPAIGN.
EMPHASIZING HIS COMMITMENT TO PRESERVE STABILITY,
MARCOS ISSUED STRONG WARNING TO "RIGHTIST
CONSPIRATORS" (OBVIOUS ALLUSION TO CERTAIN OLD SOCIETY
POLITICIANS AND CHURCH FIGURES) NOT TO OVERLY PRESUME
ON GOP'S DISINCLINATION FOR CONFRONTATION. MARCOS
ONCE AGAIN CLAIMED MUSLIM REBELLION WAS IN FINAL
STAGES. SELF RELIANCE THEME IS STAPLE OF MARCOS
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RHETORIC BUT THIS TIME WAS NOT COUPLED WITH EXPRESSED

DOUBTS CONCERNING CREDIBILITY OF U.S. COMMITMENT AS HAS BEEN THE CASE ON SOME PREVIOUS OCCASIONS. PRESIDENTIAL DECREE ON NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE IS PROMISED WITHIN A FEW DAYS BUT SCHEME SEEMS AIMED PRIMARILY AT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. IF IMPLEMENTED, IT WOULD CONSTITUTE SIGNIFICANT INNOVATION AND COULD SPARK GOVERNMENT-STUDENT CONFRONTATION. WHAT PRECISELY MARCOS MEANS BY MILITARY REORGANIZATION IS UNCLEAR ALTHOUGH EVENING EXPRESS HAS REPORTED IT AS "COMPLETE OVERHAUL OF THE MILITARY MACHINERY." PRESIDENT'S WARNING TO OPPOSITIONISTS IS STRONGEST WE HAVE HEARD IN SOME TIME AND INDICATES MARCOS IS NETTLED BY RECENT ATTENTION THEY HAVE ENJOYED-- ALBIET IN LIMITED CIRCLES-- AND IS PUTTING THEM ON NOTICE THERE ARE LIMITS TO HIS PATIENCE. AS USUAL, MARCOS' COMMENTS ON SITUATION IN MINDANAO ARE NOT CONSONANT WITH REALITY.

END SUMMARY

1. US-GOP RELATIONS: PRESIDENT MARCOS ADDRESSED 71ST GRADUATING CLASS OF PMA IN BAGUIO MORNING OF FEB 17. MARCOS STRESSED TREMENDOUS CHANGES IN DECADE SINCE HE HAD ADDRESSED 1966 PMA GRADUATING CLASS. IN 1966, PHILIPPINES WAS IN CONTROL OF PROBLEMS AT HOME AND CONFIDENT. ABROAD IT HAD FRIENDS "WHO WISHED US WELL AND PROFFERED AID AND FRIENDSHIP." THE AMERICAN SHIELD WAS "INVINCIBLE" IN THE PACIFIC. IN THE INTERVENING DECADE, HOWEVER, UNPRECEDENTED CRISES IN SEA, WORLD ECONOMY, ETC. HAD DRIVEN HOME THE LESSON THAT SMALL STATES MUST RELY ON THEMSELVES. THUS, DESPITE TREATY AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S., GOP HAD NEVER ASKED OUTSIDERS TO BECOME INVOLVED IN INTERNAL PEACE AND ORDER PROBLEMS POSED BY NPA OR MUSLIMS. MARCOS THEN REITERATED STATEMENT MADE IN FEB 14 PRESS CONFERENCE THAT GENERAL ROMULO WOULD MEET WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER IN WASHINGTON APRIL 12 TO BEGIN BASES NEGOTIATIONS.

2. NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE: MARCOS TOLD PMA GRADUATES HE WAS ESTABLISHING ONE YEAR NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE

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SYSTEM WHICH WOULD REQUIRE ALL ABLE BODIED YOUTH TO SERVE IN RURAL AREAS. PRELIMINARY TRAINING FOR THIS SERVICE WOULD BE CONDUCTED IN EITHER UNIVERSITIES OR IN SOME OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIO. YOUTH SERVICE WOULD REQUIRE WORK IN PUBLIC HEALTH, CONSTRUCTION, TEACHING, ETC. MARCOS PREDICTED NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE WOULD RESULT IN TRANSFER OF SKILLS AND TECHNOLOGY TO RURAL AREAS AND ALSO PROVIDE YOUNG PEOPLE GREATER OPPORTUNITY

FOR PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS.
PRESIDENT SAID HE WOULD SIGN DECREE ESTABLISHING
NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE
PHILIPPINES "WITHIN A FEW DAYS."

3. AFP REORGANIZATION: MARCOS SAID THE AFP MUST
CONTINUE TO BE CLEANSED OF UNWORTHY ELEMENTS. IN
LAST THREE YEARS, SEVERAL THOUSAND AFP MEMBERS
INCLUDING 60 OFFICERS HAD BEEN DISHONORABLY DIS-
CHARGED. -THE WEEDING OUT MUST CONTINUE," SAID
MARCOS, AND IT WAS NOW TIME TO "GO UP THE LADDER OF
RANKS." AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH DND AND AFP CHIEF OF
STAFF, PRESIDENT SAID HE WAS ABLE TO ANNOUNCE
"COMPLETE REORGANIZATION OF AFP WITHIN THIS QUARTER."
MARCOS SUGGESTED COURT MARTIAL REQUIREMENTS IN CASES
OF MILITARY OFFICERS MADE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO PRO-
CEED AGAINST MILITARY MALEFACTORS THAN AGAINST
THEIR CIVILIAN COUNTERPARTS, BUT SAID THERE COULD
BE NO "DOUBLE STANDARD" FOR CIVILIAN AND MILITARY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANILA 2323

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

4. OPPOSITIONISTS: MARCOS DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE
ATTENTION TO ALLEGED EFFORTS BY "RIGHTIST ZEALOTS"
TO MOBILIZE ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY, INCLUDING CATHOLIC
LAITY AND LABOR, INTO COORDINATED EFFORT TO CAPITALIZE

ON "OLD SOCIETY ISSUES." HE SPECIFICALLY CITED
OPPOSITIONIST ACTIVITIES OF THIS GROUP AMONG MOUNTAIN
TRIBES (CHICO DAM, ETC.). MARCOS CLAIMED RIGHT WING
EFFORT TO FORGE UNITED FRONT WOULD RESULT IN SAME
PROBLEMS THAT PLAGUED PHILIPPINES PRIOR TO IMPOSITION
OF MARTIAL LAW. HE SAID CERTAIN MEMBERS OF LABOR
UNIONS, CLERICS, ETC., WERE INNOCENT AND UNSUSPECTING
TOOLS, BUT OTHERS, INCLUDING OLD SOCIETY POLITICIANS
WERE ACTING FROM "QUESTIONABLE MOTIVES." PRESIDENT
SAID HE HAD HEARD THAT CERTAIN OLD SOCIETY POLITICIANS
WERE MOUNTING PUBLIC PLATFORMS TO CRITICIZE HIS
GOVERNMENT. HE SAID HE WOULD NOT DIGNIFY SUCH ATTACKS
WITH COMMENT. HE WARNED, HOWEVER, THESE FORCES SHOULD
NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED AND THAT "INSURGENCIES" MUST
NEVER BE DISCOUNTED UNTIL DESTROYED. MARCOS DECLARED
THAT HE WAS COMMITTED TO PRESERVING STABILITY AT ALL
COSTS. GOP WOULD NOT SACRIFICE ITS REFORM PROGRAM
AND WOULD DEAL WITH THOSE TESTING ITS STRENGTH OR
PATIENCE. HE WARNED OPPOSITIONISTS NOT TO BE MISLED
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OR ACT IN BELIEF GOVERNMENT WOULD AVOID CONFRONTATION
AT ALL COSTS.

5. MUSLIM REVOLT: MARCOS CLAIMED THAT 15,000 OUT
OF ESTIMATED 16,000 MUSLIM DISSIDENTS HAVE RETURNED
TO THE FOLDS OF LAW. THE GOVERNMENT IS "WINDING UP
THE EFFORT IN THE SOUTH." HE CLAIMED THERE HAD BEEN
A SUBSTANTIAL DECLINE IN FLOW OF ARMS TO THE 1,000
MEN WHO NOW COMPRISE ACTIVE DISSIDENT FORCES AS WELL
AS DRYING UP OF WEAPONS TO NPA. MARCOS CONTENTED
THIS NONAVAILABILITY OF ARMS HAD FORCED INSURGENTS
TO TURN TO TACTICS OF HARRASSMENT, TERRORISM, AND
SABOTAGE.

6. COMMENT: SELF RELIANCE THEME IS STAPLE OF
MARCOS RHETORIC ALTHOUGH ON THIS OCCASION IT WAS
VOICED WITHOUT DISPARAGEMENT OF CREDIBILITY OF
U.S. COMMITMENT. MARCOS' EMPHASIS ON NEED TO WEED
OUT MILITARY BAD APPLES SEEMS DESIGNED TO COUNTERACT
CHARGES MILITARY IMMUNE TO CRITICISM OR REFORM.
WHAT PRECISELY PRESIDENT HAS IN MIND HEN HE TALKS
OF AFP "REORGANIZATION WITHIN THIS QUARTER" IS
UNCLEAR ALTHOUGH WE SUSPECT THIS MEANS REVITALIZATION
AND CLEANUP UNDER AEGIS OF UNDERSECRETARY BARBERO
AND NOT PERSONNEL CHANGES. CONCEIVABLY, NATIONAL
YOUTH SERVICE, WITH ITS MAOIST OVERTONES, COULD BE
GENUINE INNOVATION BUT LIKE SO MANY OTHER MARCOS
SCHEMES, IT IS UNLIKELY IT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED.
WE SHALL REPORT IN DETAIL WHEN DECREE PUBLISHED BUT

AT THIS JUNCTURE, IT APPEARS AIMED AT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO NOW MUST FACE PROSPECT OF RUSTIFICATION IF THEY DISPLEASE THE GOVERNMENT. IF PRESIDENT ACTUALLY SERIOUS ABOUT IMPLEMENTING YOUTH SCHEME, IT COULD GENERATE CONSIDERABLE FRICTION WITH STUDENTS. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS ON RIGHT WING OPPOSITIONISTS EXCEPTIONALLY STRONG. HE IS OBVIOUSLY NETTLED BY RECENT ACTIONS OF SOME CLERICS, LABOR LEADERS, SQUATTERS, ETC., AND IS PUTTING THEM ON NOTICE (AND REASSURING HARD LINE MILITARY SUPPORTERS) THAT THERE ARE LIMITS TO HIS PATIENCE. PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ALSO EVIDENCE PIQUE WITH POLITICIANS NOW BEDEVILING
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HIM BY CALLING FOR CONVENTION OF INA. FANALLY, PRESIDENT'S ROSEATE ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION IN THE SOUTH IS NO MORE PERSUASIVE NOW THAT IT WAS A YEAR AGO. IT IS DOUBTBUL HE HIMSELF BELIEVES IT AND HIS REMARKS SEEMED AIMED AT BOOSTING THE MORALE OF NEW SECOND LIEUTENANTS WHO MAY SOON FIND THEMSELVES LEADING PLATOONS IN MINDANANO.
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